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Biblical Notes.

Melchizedek. The evidence from the clay records is brought forward by Prof. Sayce to establish the Genesis account of the Priest-King of Jerusalem as a real historical personage. Even the later biblical mention of Melchizedek cast a hue of mystery over his personality. But Egyptian archives unearthed at Tel-el-Amarna, dating back to the century preceding the Exodus, contain letters sent from the vassal princes of Syria and Palestine to their Egyptian sovereign. The prince of Jerusalem at this time was Ebed-tob, and his letters throw much light upon the early history of Jerusalem, the identity of Melchizedek included. The name of the city at that period was Salim or Salem which was the name of its patron god (meaning, the God of Peace), who is identified with one of the forms of the Sun-god worshiped in Babylonia. Here, then, is the etymology of the name Jerusalem, meaning the City of the God of Peace. And here also Prof. Sayce finds historical verification of the position occupied by Melchizedek as king of Salem, and priest of the Most High God of the Canaanite city, in the time of Abraham, to whom Abram the Hebrew paid tribute. Ebed-tob was himself such a priest-king of Jerusalem—king by reason of his priesthood, and the office seems to have continued even down to the time when David captured the Jebusite fort on Zion.

The Gospel of John as a Book for the Future. The words of Prof. Porter on this subject in a recent issue of the *S. S. Times*, are worthy of attention. Among other things he says: "the Gospel of John shares with the other books of the New Testament the character of being a book for its time, a book aimed at present definite needs of actual men; but it is distinguished from the rest by being also in the writer's intention a book for the future. The other books have proved to be such in fact; John's book is such in conscious purpose. A new prospect had opened before his eyes, which neither Peter nor James nor Paul nor the synoptic writers could so clearly have seen—the prospect of a long continuance of the Christian community in the world before the Lord's return. John, in his old age, may well have felt upon him the burden of the time close at hand when no one would be left to testify to the Jesus of history. There is abundant evidence in his Gospel that he is thinking of this time. John, then, has a double task,—the more immediate one, to teach how Christian faith is to maintain itself in its purity and commend itself in its power among men of Greek culture and modes of thought; and the larger one, to call forth and make abiding a living faith in an unseen Christ. The first task he accomplished by teaching men who were seeking for a revelation of God and a knowledge of truth, to find these, not in remote speculations, but in an earthly life, a person really seen and loved. For the second task, this knowledge of the earthly life was not enough,—was not even necessary. It is better to know the unseen Christ (Jno. 20:29; 16:17). He writes to vindicate the abiding personal presence and spiritual power of the living Christ in the world, and to teach that he can be as truly known and loved and followed by those who are to come as he was during his earthly life."